

# **FINAL REPORT OF THE BOSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT'S ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MAY 1999**

## **OVERVIEW**

On May 15, 1999, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Andrew Cuomo released a report that examined the Boston Housing Authority's (BHA) response to racial and ethnic harassment which took place at the Charlestown and South Boston developments since 1996. That report contained 53 recommendations for improvement by the BHA which Mayor Thomas Menino and BHA Administrator Sandra Henriquez agreed to implement.

This report discusses actions taken by the BHA to implement these recommendations, and concludes that substantial changes have been made at the BHA.

The primary recommendations proposed actions to improve both BHA's management functions and the quality of life for BHA residents. They included enhancing security; adjusting BHA's Civil Rights Protection Plan (CRPP) and then adhering to the plan; giving residents new and helpful information on their civil rights; providing training for residents and staff on civil rights and diversity; increasing the effectiveness and responsiveness of its Office of Civil Rights (OCR) by hiring additional investigators and improving investigative operations; developing new criteria for personnel evaluations; improving the emergency transfer process; changing certain on-site personnel at the Charlestown and South Boston developments; reducing the housing waiting list; and re-engineering the Occupancy Department.

HUD monitored BHA's progress as the changes were being made. HUD interviewed key senior management staff, residents, the Tenant Task Forces' representatives, community groups and police from the BHA and Boston Police Department.

In addition to interviews, an examination was performed of hundreds of documents and records in 65 categories both at BHA's Central Offices and its development sites in Charlestown and South Boston on more than 50 separate occasions. HUD's monitoring also included attending community meetings, bi-monthly Police/Community Relations Task Forces' meetings held in Charlestown and South Boston, staff and resident diversity/civil rights training, a weekly meeting of the Transfer Review Committee, Occupancy Department staff computer training, Unity Days, on-site review with BHA's security consultant, and quarterly status meetings with the BHA Administrator.

Overall, the face of civil rights has changed dramatically at the BHA. BHA's most important accomplishment is the significant decrease in severe acts of racial and/or ethnic violence such as assault. At the same time, the incidence of civil rights complaints filed by residents with the BHA increased slightly because new, informative materials were created and distributed regarding the CRPP, establishment of the hotline, and the increased visibility and enhancement of the Office of Civil Rights. This recent increase in complaints more often deal with neighbor relations than violent acts. Residents expressed an enhanced awareness of the increased civil rights protections and an increased comfort level with the BHA's response to civil rights violations.

The hotline allows residents to quickly report civil rights offenses, and hotline posters - displayed in seven languages - are widely distributed throughout the Authority. All resident training sessions and meetings are joined by interpreters in as many as four languages besides English. BHA Police and on-site property managers are trained and conversant in the CRPP procedures and are administering the Plan effectively. Community-wide meetings held by the BHA Administrator and the City of Boston Police are reinforcing the message of a strict "zero tolerance" policy for civil rights violations, as well as explaining added protections to ensure residents' civil rights. A Civil Rights Guide has been widely distributed in seven languages.

Other notable accomplishments include reducing the waiting list by almost 7,000 names; completely revising the personnel appraisal system with a civil rights factor as a rating component; upgrading the Occupancy Department's computer system; enhancing the Civil Rights Office with new computer systems, procedures and staff to readily address civil rights concerns raised by residents; and adding a Transfer Process Coordinator responsible for quickly responding to and processing residents' civil rights and safety requests.

The progress achieved toward incorporating civil rights into the mainstream of public housing management sets an industry standard, making the BHA the leading example and a national model to be replicated by other public housing authorities.

The Authority made a commitment to address these recommendations within a year from May 1999. The majority of the recommendations have been completed, leaving only a few relatively minor activities requiring additional time for completion. These are largely the recommendations which require union involvement or physical improvements. Since these recommendations will not be fully completed until next year, HUD will continue to review the Authority's practices and procedures both for full completion and adherence to the recommendations. HUD will continue its monitoring and oversight responsibilities of the BHA through a locally-based cross-functional BHA Team which has been permanently established in HUD's Massachusetts State Office of Public Housing. At a minimum, regular monthly meetings will take place between the Authority and HUD.

HUD congratulates Mayor Menino and Administrator Henriquez on their success, and we look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the BHA.

## STATUS REPORT

**Recommendation #1 -- Immediately undertake a complete audit of the tenant files and rent collection practices at Old Colony and Charlestown. Make the Asset Management Review Team audit of 100% of the tenant files a top priority.**

BHA has completed a 100% file audit and review of rent collection procedures at Old Colony and Charlestown.

After completion of the audit files at Old Colony and Charlestown, the BHA has proposed and HUD has approved a procedure for conducting general office assessments at each of the other family developments. These on-site assessments include random sampling of resident files, rather than a 100% file audit as well as a broader review of all management procedures with an aim to correcting any cited deficiencies. The on-site assessments of federal family sites have begun and are scheduled for completion by the end of September.

The HUD site visits uncovered significant problems with the resident files at the Charlestown development. The BHA audit team did uncover the same problems and it will take great effort on the part of the BHA to correct the file deficiencies. Specifically, many families had not been re-certified as federal regulations require for a number of years, third party verification of income was missing and there was little evidence in the tenant files that the BHA was notifying residents of the requirement to re-certify.

In response to these findings, the BHA is in the process of correcting each of the tenants' files in Charlestown. In addition, the Director of Property Management is providing training to site managers and staff regarding the maintenance of tenants files with a special emphasis on the importance of documentation and accuracy in conducting the required re-certifications.

BHA performed the required rent collection audit at the Old Colony and Charlestown developments and established new rent collection procedures to reduce arrears in tenants' accounts at these properties.

The Office of Public Housing held a number of visits in September to confirm that the BHA is taking all necessary actions to correct the file problems, monitor progress to correct errors identified by the audits, review the problems identified by the office assessments and ensure that appropriate action is being taken to address the problems. Monthly meetings between HUD's Office of Public Housing and the BHA's Director of Property Management are being held to address immediately any such concerns that may arise from the on-site visits.

**Recommendation #2 -- Make staff changes at Old Colony and Charlestown given the history of problems at those developments.**

Management staff changes have occurred at both the Old Colony development in South Boston and the Bunker Hill development in Charlestown as recommended, and were confirmed by on-site monitoring.

**Recommendation #3 -- Settle or resolve all outstanding Fair Housing complaints and litigation involving racial and ethnic harassment so that BHA can focus its resources on implementing the recommendations in the report.**

By July 26, 1999 all outstanding fair housing complaints and litigation involving racial and ethnic harassment filed with HUD have been settled as recommended.

**Recommendation #4 -- Assign additional professional investigators or BHA Police to assist in fact gathering during administrative inquiries and to attend civil rights related private conferences scheduled by the site managers.**

Addressed in #5 below

**Recommendation #5 -- Develop a written policy requiring the Office of Civil Rights to attend private conferences.**

The BHA has hired two additional staff for the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) to conduct fact gathering in administrative inquiries with the position title Civil Rights Specialists. One was hired in November 1999 and the other in December 1999. Both were interviewed by HUD and demonstrated extensive knowledge of their responsibilities. Each had professional experience relevant to fulfilling their responsibilities: one was a former employee of HUD's New England Office of the Assistant General Counsel and the other worked for the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office. Files were reviewed containing final reports of their fact finding.

BHA or Boston Municipal Police attend private conferences on an as needed basis. The Civil Rights Specialists are attending civil rights-related private conferences more frequently. The Office of Civil Rights monitors the site managers performance in handling civil rights related matters on-site and provides the necessary support and input as required. The Director of Civil Rights makes the judgment as to whether it is necessary for OCR to attend the conference. Occasionally it is necessary for staff from the Office of Civil Rights to attend the private conferences. These conferences are meetings with the accused parties, and site managers are required to address the matter and advise residents of the potential lease violations involved. All site managers are trained in the CRPP and determine in conjunction with OCR whether OCR is needed at the private conferences.

Police coverage at both Old Colony and Bunker Hill is provided in part by Boston Municipal Police Officers who are detailed to the BHA Police force. These officers assist the BHA Office of Civil Rights in gathering information relevant to its administrative inquiries.

BHA's policy "strongly encourages" rather than requires the Office of Civil Right's attendance at private conferences. This policy was derived from the Settlement Agreement in the Jane Doe cases. A provision in the CRPP allows for residents to request the participation of OCR in the private conference. On-site interviews with the two site managers at the Old Colony and Charlestown developments indicated that they have been trained to address civil rights matters during private conferences with the tenants.

Staff interviews and a review of the civil rights files revealed that the managers appear to adequately address the civil rights issues at private conferences. Site managers hold private conferences with tenants approximately three times a week on average. Both managers demonstrated competency in carrying out these private conferences without the routine assistance of OCR.

HUD accepts this practice of OCR attending the civil rights related private conference with the residents on an as needed basis but will continue to monitor this practice for its effectiveness.

**Recommendation #6 -- Develop a written policy requiring CRD staff and Regional managers to work together to ensure that site managers fully comply with the CRPP.**

The CRPP contains a policy sufficient to meet the requirements of this recommendation and it is also contained in the relevant job descriptions. HUD on-site monitoring entailed interviews with the regional managers and on-site review of the civil rights case files. It confirmed that OCR and the Regional Managers are working together to ensure that site managers are complying with the CRPP. The files indicate that the regional property managers are being copied on all civil rights cases.

**Recommendation #7 -- Give CRD a role in evaluating the site managers' compliance with the CRPP process when a performance evaluation system is put into place.**

The BHA performance evaluation system is designed to provide input from the Director of the Office of Civil Rights (OCR).

The implementation of the performance evaluation system for the workforce began in April 2000 and was substantially completed as scheduled by September 2000. The site managers are among those under this new performance appraisal system. A procedure to allow the Fair Housing Compliance Coordinator, the Director of Civil Rights and the regional property managers to participate in the evaluation of site managers, other management employees and administrative staff has been developed. The on-site review conducted in April 2000 reflects that employee

ratings include a civil rights component. Two labor unions that do not have direct dealings with residents will not be subject to this evaluation system until union contract negotiations occur next Spring.

**Recommendation #8 -- Develop an on-line computerized tracking system for Civil Rights complaints to allow CRD to assure that all requirements of the CRPP, including deadlines are met. The system should be capable of capturing digital photos of racial graffiti and vandalism, printing out the status of individual complaints and notifying BHA Police, site managers, Regional Directors, and the Occupancy Department of the actions taken on outstanding complaints including final resolution.**

The BHA has acquired a computer software system known as "Time Matters." It is an off-the-shelf system, designed for use by law firms, that has been modified to meet the particular needs of the BHA.

The BHA began use of the system on January 1, 2000. It has a stationary data base that is controlled by OCR staff. The opening screen contains all the questions on the Civil Rights Administrative Report Form (CRARF). It has the capacity to attach e-mails, correspondence or telephone summaries to the computerized files. A review of the files indicates that the OCR is using these features to record the history of actions taken on the complaints. Hard copies are printed out and maintained in separate files.

The system contains daily prompts to advise each Investigator of the time frame requirements of the CRPP. These prompts remain on the screen until the required activity is completed. The Investigator may override the prompts to extend time frames an additional 14 days. The OCR Director can monitor any time frame extensions to determine which Civil Rights Specialist extended the time frames. A review of the files indicated that CRPP time frames are generally met without an extension. The system is capable of capturing digital photos of racial graffiti and vandalism as recommended.

New software to generate reports (Crystal Reports) has been added to the OCR's computer system. This enhancement to the system enables civil rights case status reports to be accessed by the field site offices, the BHA police and the Occupancy Department staff. Access to files by these other staff is limited to a "read only" capacity. All OCR employees received one-on-one individual training on both the original system and the enhancements from a consultant and demonstrated extensive knowledge of the system and were comfortable using the system. The system's capacity meets the requirements of the recommendation and will provide OCR with an effective and efficient tool for case processing and management.

**Recommendation #9 -- Modify the Civil Rights Administrative Report Form (CRARF) to provide a checkoff box that states if the victim is willing to participate with the offender in voluntary mediation.**

The CRARF has the required check-off box. A core group of mediators has been trained. Responsibility for mediations has been assigned to the newly hired Coordinator of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity in the OCR. All of the backlogged mediations have taken place and new cases are being scheduled for mediation as they come in. Two Advanced Mediation Training sessions for employees and residents were held in May and June 2000. The OCR is also working with other City agencies to develop a city-wide pool of mediators which will be shared by the BHA and the other City agencies. A five-day mediation training for employees and residents is being planned for January 2001.

**Recommendation #10 -- Where the reporting party indicates a willingness to participate in mediation, a copy of the CRARF should be immediately sent to the Mediation Project.**

A system has been developed whereby notification is made after the filing of a CRARF and a preference for mediation is indicated to the BHA's Mediation Program, operated by the Office of Civil Rights. A consultant from the Harvard Mediation Project conducted training for BHA's staff in mediation skills and techniques. For the purposes of this recommendation, HUD accepts the operation of the BHA Mediation Program within the Office of Civil Rights as fulfilling this requirement.

**Recommendation #11 -- Routinely request a copy of the BPD report on any bias- related incident which should be kept with the CRARF. The police reports serve as a succinct summary of what actually happened as observed by a trained investigator. Often it is the only fact summary in the file, and an understanding of the facts is crucial to BHA decision-making regarding transfers and evictions.**

All OCR staff indicate that they routinely request Boston Police Department (BPD) reports. All files reviewed at the developments and at the Office of Civil Rights either contained Police Reports or records of requests for Reports. Both developments placed CRARF's and Police Reports in tenant files.

**Recommendation #12 -- Establish internal time frames for processing administrative inquiries and for submission of documents to all appropriate departments. This will enable timely monitoring of complaint processing.**

The CRPP establishes internal time frames that are tracked on the Time Matters system. On-site review of all of the approximately 75 civil rights case files showed adherence to these time-frames.

**Recommendation #13 -- Follow the time frames set out in the CRPP for holding private conferences.**

The Civil Rights Protection Plan (CRPP), Section 4.0-4.2 establishes time-frames for holding private conferences. All of the approximately 75 civil rights case files reviewed at the developments showed adherence to these time-frames.

**Recommendation #14 – Develop and implement a policy requiring BHA staff to keep residents regularly informed about the administrative inquiries into their cases, even when no progress is made. These efforts should be routinely documented in the file. The Transfer Coordinator should be ultimately responsible for communicating with residents as to the status of their civil rights related transfer requests.**

The CRPP, Section 6.3 establishes policies and procedures to keep residents informed of the administrative inquiry into their cases within fourteen (14) days of receiving the Incident Report Form. The “Time Matters” civil rights computer case tracking and management system automatically produces letters at the 14 day point in the development of the case, to be sent to the reporting party informing them of the status of their case, even if no progress has been made. These letters are retained in the administrative inquiry case file.

A selection to fill the position of Transfer Process Coordinator (TPC) was made in March 2000. The person originally hired for the position in August 1999 ended her employment in November 1999. The current TPC acted in the position from November 1999 until her selection in March 2000. New procedures and systems are in place in the Occupancy Department which document the progress of transfer requests and notification to residents. Review of older transfer request files showed processing delays; however, the new transfer requests are being handled within 30 days. The Transfer Process Coordinator is responsible for keeping tenants informed of the status of their civil rights-related transfer requests. This notification is made to residents in collaboration with the Office of Civil Rights.

**Recommendation #15 -- Develop a system to track the number of evictions that are the result of civil rights incidents.**

A variation of the “Time Matters” software used by the Office of Civil Rights is in place in the Legal Department. (See #8.) The Time Matters software was adapted to reflect the various kinds of case tracking required by the BHA Legal Department that also allows for the easy tracking of eviction cases. Tracking reports of eviction cases by codes are now in the computer system for access by managers. Examination of the system revealed that eviction cases that resulted from civil rights issues are able to be tracked by this category as recommended. Staff are proficient in the use of the system.

**Recommendation #16 – Revise BHA policies to require site managers to inform regional property managers about bias incidents and their progress in responding to bias incidents.**



The CRPP establishes this policy and this requirement is also in the job descriptions. A review conducted on-site of the civil rights case files showed that relevant civil rights case documents were routinely copied to regional property managers. The two regional property managers interviewed consistently received copies of CRPP related matters. Compliance with CRPP is routinely and consistently monitored by the regional property managers through a monthly status report completed by the site managers. These reports are also reviewed by the Director of Property Management.

**Recommendation #17 – Reaffirm the CRPP policy that CRD staff and site managers must call the BPD immediately when an incident is reported, if the tenant has not already contacted the police. BHA staff do not have any discretion in this area.**

The CRPP establishes a policy sufficient to meet the requirements of this recommendation. A review of civil rights case files at the developments and in the Office of Civil Rights shows that site managers have called the BPD when they become aware of incidents such as graffiti. The Director of Civil Rights and staff routinely monitor the site managers compliance with the CRPP.

There are three policing authorities utilized to complete the requirements of this recommendation, BHA Police, the City of Boston Police and Municipal Police. Each of the three entities is utilizing the City of Boston Police Department's (BPD) Incident Report. The Incident Reports are given a BPD number and are signed off on by the BPD Sergeant on duty. This represents the notification required by the recommendation.

**Recommendation #18 -- Test the effectiveness of the video presented to applicants by surveying the applicants two months after they have seen the video as to their memories of its contents and make appropriate modifications as identified by the test.**

The video tape shown to applicants will be revised pursuant to HUD's recommended changes. HUD has recommended expanding upon the explanation of the CRPP and the process for filing civil rights complaints. Distribution of the CRPP and reiteration of its provision by site staff during initial tenant orientation and lease signing ensures that new tenants are familiar with BHA procedures. Reiteration of the CRPP also is conducted on an annual basis for current tenants during the recertification process.

A method for surveying tenants or applicants as to their knowledge and recollections of the contents of the video pertaining to the CRPP will be devised by BHA and HUD. This will occur after the completion of the revisions to the video. The video is scheduled to be completed after adoption of the new ACOP provisions by early 2001.

**Recommendation #19 -- Advertise the existence of the civil rights hotline in languages other than English, such as Spanish, Creole, Vietnamese, and Chinese.**

The BHA has produced and distributed a poster advertising the hotline in seven other languages besides English. On-site monitoring revealed that the posters are prominently displayed in the Management Offices and widely disseminated in the common areas throughout the developments.

**Recommendation #20 -- Explore low-cost methods of advertising the hotline such as distributing refrigerator magnets printed with the steps to take when a resident is a victim of racial or ethnic harassment at Old Colony and Charlestown. This magnet should contain a BHA contact telephone number, and the numbers for the BPD, HUD, and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD).**

The BHA distributed a flyer in Spanish and English to each household notifying residents of the availability of refrigerator magnets during April 2000. The information contained on the magnets included the telephone numbers for the BHA 24 hour Civil Rights Hotline and the BPD and BHA Police. The slogan "Every Month is Fair Housing Month" is included on the magnet. The BHA has obtained 40,000 magnets. They are available at the Management Offices and are distributed widely on-site at community events and forums.

The steps to be taken when a resident is the victim of racial harassment along with the telephone numbers for HUD and MCAD are included in the Civil Rights Guide referred to below.

**Recommendation #21 – Create a brochure summarizing the CRPP and advertising the hotline and translate the brochure into several languages as appropriate for BHA's resident population. Distribute this brochure widely through the BHA, during new applicant processing, in recertification packages, in site management offices, in laundry rooms, and at tenant task force meetings.**

The BHA has created a "Civil Rights Guide" in English, Spanish, Chinese, Haitian Creole and Vietnamese. The guide will also be available in Russian by the end of the year. The guide, which addresses the CRPP and advertises the hotline, is being widely disseminated as recommended. Since the wide distribution of the informational materials regarding one's right to file a civil rights complaint, BHA reports that the incidence of residents filing civil rights cases has increased somewhat. BHA also is in the process of putting the Civil Right Guide on tape in English and Spanish for the visually impaired.

**Recommendation #22 -- Add conferencing capability to the hotline so that the AT&T language service can be used to take reports about ethnic and racial harassment reported by non-English speakers.**

Conferencing capacity has been added to the hotline. This service has been taken over from AT&T by a private concern and the BHA has established an account with the company. A large poster is displayed in the OCR and in the management offices at the developments explaining

how the service can be used by tenants. The telephone translation service is used by OCR approximately 3-5 times per month. Site managers report that most tenants speak some English and that several staff members assist in translation when needed. The language interpreter services provided by the City of Boston's Office of New Bostonians is available weekdays to BHA employees and residents. BHA hires translators for the nighttime community-wide meetings with tenants. BHA is the largest user of the City Translation Service.

**Recommendation #23 -- Maintain a roster of interpreters available for hearings, private conferences, and community meetings to keep costs down and to ensure that interpretive services are available at all events requiring cross check language communication, where the AT&T Language Line would be unavailable, unsuitable, or prohibitively expensive.**

Interpreters are provided through the Office of New Bostonians established by the Mayor to address the needs of the immigrant community. Translation services are also offered by this office. A roster of translators is maintained by the Office of New Bostonians and is made available for BHA's use.

**Recommendation # 24 -- Distribute a fact sheet to any person filing a CRARF that informs them of their rights, outlines the CRPP's procedures, and describes possible relief that is available. Residents also should automatically be given a copy of HUD's Fair Housing Claim Form. The CRARF should have a check-box which indicates that the fact sheet and Fair Housing Claim Form have been given to resident filing a CRARF.**

The BHA uses the "Civil Rights Guide" for the purposes of this recommendation instead of a "fact sheet." The Guide contains the same content recommended except for a description of possible relief.

A HUD Claim Form is not distributed at the time of a CRARF filing. Instead BHA advises tenants in writing of their rights to file a HUD complaint after receipt of a CRARF. Residents filing CRARF's receive cover letters, advising them of their rights to file a HUD complaint and the Civil Rights Guide, which provides both the HUD and MCAD addresses and telephone numbers.

HUD accepts the distribution of its brochure rather than the HUD complaint form as an acceptable means of communicating the federal rights available to victims of alleged civil rights violations.

**Recommendation #25 -- Provide civil rights training to the residents. This could include an abbreviated version of the mediation and diversity training provided through the Harvard Mediation Project.**

The BHA conducted four sessions of civil rights training for residents of the Bunker Hill development in Charlestown. BHA has facilitated ongoing sessions at the request of the residents. The sessions in Charlestown resulted in the focus of multi-cultural resident participation in the Bunker Hill Day parade. At the West Broadway development in South Boston, resident input resulted in shorter sessions of two hours each, stretching over seven sessions. Also, a “train the trainer” component is being offered for those residents who wish to take on responsibility. Despite intensive efforts, turn-out has been limited to approximately 25 residents per session. The BHA will continue these Civil Rights/Diversity Training Programs in both the South Boston and Charlestown communities while experimenting with incentives to obtain increased resident participation. HUD also recommended various methods to induce more resident involvement. The next session is scheduled for Old Colony in November 2000.

**Recommendation #26 -- Create and support more interracial and ethnic community events and social activities such as “Unity Days.”**

The BHA reported that it held a Unity Day on 8/7/99 at Bunker Hill; on 8/14/99 at Old Colony; on 8/21/99 at Mary Ellen McCormack. The Director of the Community Services Department (CSD), in conjunction with the Tenant Task Forces, has responsibility for planning and carrying out these events. There were 15 additional Unity Days held at other public housing sites in Boston during 1999. These were attended by the Mayor, the BHA Administrator, her executive staff and Directors of OCR and CSD and were joined by a wide and diverse resident population. HUD staff from the Community Builder’s Program and the Offices of Public Housing and the Inspector General were also in attendance at the events.

Unity Day events for the summer of 2000 have been held on 7/22/00 at Old Colony; 8/12/00 at Bunker Hill; 8/19/00 at Mary Ellen McCormack; 9/30/00 at West Broadway. A schedule for Unity Day events was devised for all of the BHA developments for 2000. All of the citywide unity days have been held for the summer of 2000. HUD participated in these events again this summer with the Mayor, BHA senior staff, community groups and tenant associations.

Additionally BHA has formed a Committee to create plans for celebrating Black History and Hispanic Heritage Months.

**Recommendation #27 -- Recruit a diverse pool of applicants for the BHA police to reflect the demographics of BHA developments. Draft and implement a recruitment plan.**

Two new officers were hired at the end of last year, prior to full implementation of this recommendation. One officer is an Hispanic male and the other is a white female.

The BHA submitted its recruitment process with the Public Safety Plan, and reports that recruitment will be done in accordance with the National Accreditation Standards for Public Housing Authorities (NASPHA). This plan outlines methods of affirmative recruitment which the BHA will follow in the future.

Police officer position vacancy announcements were widely advertised in accordance with NASPHA at the end of July 2000. The results produced one hundred and forty (140) applicants of which forty percent (40%) were minorities. The police examination was held in September and at least three selections are expected to be made by the end of the year.

**Recommendation #28 -- Increase the number and frequency of police patrols through the various developments to deter race- and ethnic-related vandalism as well as other crimes.**

The BHA submitted a Public Safety Plan in August 1999 indicating that the number and frequency of patrols have increased in the Charlestown and Old Colony developments. HUD reviewed the schedule during a monitoring visit in February and encouraged continued compliance with this recommendation as a means of deterring race and ethnic related crimes. BPD and BHA Police reported a decrease in severe acts of racial and ethnic crimes and vandalism during the past year.

**Recommendation #29 -- Encourage officers to live in or near developments including use of the HUD Officer Next Door Program.**

The PHA Plan, submitted to HUD in March, addresses the intent of encouraging BHA Police Officers to live in or near public housing developments and making use of the Officer Next Door Program. BHA reports that information on this policy has been distributed twice to Police personnel, announcements were made twice at roll calls and the information was posted on the bulletin board at the BHA Police Station.

However, since only a few of the BHA Police Officers interviewed expressed any knowledge of a policy to encourage officers to live in or around public housing, the BHA again distributed copies of the policy to all officers. The minimum requirement to fulfill this recommendation has been met. As well, the current proposed ACOP and the PHA five year plan address this policy. The availability of this program will be announced quarterly at roll call.

**Recommendation #30 -- Expand the use of bike patrols in order to promote better BHA Police-community relations.**

The use of bike patrols has been expanded to promote better police-community relations. Positive feedback has been received on the adoption of this initiative from site managers, Tenant Task Force members, the BHA Police and individual tenants. Monitoring visits with the BHA Police have shown an enthusiasm for the bicycles and an expectation of their continued and increased use, except during inclement weather conditions.

**Recommendation #31 -- Use Public and Indian Housing Drug Elimination funding for an assessment of BHA Police's programs and design and identify law enforcement strategies.**

HUD selected Harold A. Wright, Public Safety Management Associates as the contractor to help implement this recommendation. An initial meeting was held with the contractor, HUD and the BHA on July 6, 2000 with follow up meetings throughout August 2000. The contractor began the assessment on July 11, 2000. Some minimal base-line work was completed by Sparta, the security contractor obtained to address the other two security/law enforcement recommendations, numbers 33 and 36. In so doing, as a part of Sparta's overall assessment, the law enforcement programs were reviewed. However the more comprehensive assessment and recommendations have come from the Wright contractor in a Report dated September 7, 2000.

HUD has advised the BHA that it expects them to implement and adopt this security contractor's recommendations expeditiously.

**Recommendation #32 -- Increase coordination between BHA police and the BPD and convene a task force of BHA and City officials, law enforcement officers, BHA resident and representatives of community groups to evaluate the concerns of residents about BHA police.**

Starting in July 1998 in Charlestown and in September 1999 in South Boston, Police-Community Task Force meetings have occurred twice each month in these two communities to help promote better relations and coordination between BHA Police and BPD and the community at large. These Task Forces were created in response to public housing residents concerns over safety issues and to establish a central communication base for all police and related agencies in order to exchange information and coordinate efforts. These meetings are widely attended by the Tenant Task Forces leaders, civil rights organizations, community groups, state and local government representatives, school officials, the Community Disorders Unit of the Boston Police Department, Boston Police Community Service Officers, Detectives, Probation Officers, State Police Officers, Counsel from the Attorney General's Office and the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, BHA's Deputy Administrator, Director of Civil Rights and site managers and staff, Boston Municipal and BHA Police Officers, representatives of the Boy's and Girl's Clubs, HUD staff from the Inspector General's Office, the Mayor's Neighborhood Representative and other community leaders.

The success of these meetings has led to the creation of sub-groups throughout the Charlestown community, which also meet monthly to discuss and resolve issues related to fair housing, public safety, civil rights training and diversity and monitoring in the community. The community-wide participation, open dialogue on issues related to safety and civil rights, along with the full cooperation of all police agencies have been principal factors in reducing civil rights incidents in Charlestown.

The Task Force meetings in South Boston focus more on BHA resident and general BHA concerns as a result of the fact that there are three developments in the community each with its

own set of issues with which to contend. The South Boston Task Force provided the first opportunity for the Police and the community to share information, exchange concerns and address solutions. The noted improvements, as a result, are in the area of resident awareness, police responsiveness to trespass orders, evictions, drug activity, and identifying problem areas in the developments.

Up to this point, the Task Force meetings have not evaluated resident concerns with BHA Police. Instead four community-wide resident meetings were held this spring by the BHA in conjunction with the City of Boston Police in the South Boston and Charlestown developments to address these issues. These meetings provided a forum for residents to discuss their concerns with BHA Police. Flyers were widely distributed in five languages to announce the meetings and encourage resident and community participation in these meetings. Interpreters in four languages were used to translate for the non-English speaking residents. On average, approximately 25 residents attended these meetings/forums.

**Recommendation #33 -- Install video surveillance equipment at sites where there are repeated graffiti incidents to assist in the identification of offenders and to discourage the practice. This equipment should be portable and discreetly placed to avoid detection.**

The BHA contracted with a private security firm, Sparta, to conduct an in depth on-site analysis of its security needs to help implement this recommendation. The contractor completed its assessment, met with BHA and issued a final report. Sparta's final Report indicates that surveillance equipment is not needed at these developments and would not be a cost effective measure to avert graffiti. Instead Sparta concludes that BHA's rapid response procedures for graffiti removal is a successful method of eradicating the problem. Since the 1999 Assessment by HUD, the incidence of graffiti has decreased. An annual assessment will take place to determine if the current course of action continues to be prudent.

**Recommendation #34 -- Establish and enforce a formal written policy that requires site managers to walk their properties on a regular basis to monitor occurrences of graffiti and vandalism and report the dates and times and findings of these walks to higher management.**

The policy is outlined in the CRPP for property managers or their designees to walk the properties on a regular basis to monitor for occurrences of graffiti and vandalism. On-site HUD monitoring of the Old Colony and Bunker Hill developments revealed that the site managers were largely delegating this task to other management or maintenance staff. Reports of bias-related crimes resulting from these walks are routinely reported by the site staff to the property managers. The site manager at Old Colony walks the property weekly. The walks occur infrequently by the site manager at Bunker Hill due to time constraints, in part imposed by the size of the property. Starting in September 2000, the OCR will station two of its civil right staff

at the Charlestown and South Boston developments one day per week to walk the properties and provide civil right assistance to the managers.

In addition, Bunker Hill has established a community walk through the development in conjunction with neighboring church officials and diverse tenant groups to promote harmony at the development. This typically occurs after the Spanish Mass, which is promoted by the Charlestown Task Force and regularly attended by a cross-section of the community, including the Mayor, elected officials and the Boston Police. The BHA has also established an annual manager's night out initiative occurring just after day light savings time changes in October. BHA senior staff walk through the developments to examine lighting, roof top door locks and other such physical characteristics requiring maintenance. A list of the findings are provided to the site management office the next day.

In addition, staff from the OCR are working onsite one day per week in the Bunker Hill and Old Colony developmemts.

**Recommendation #35 -- Purchase Polaroid cameras, disposable cameras, or digital cameras for emergency or after-hours maintenance crews to take pictures of racially motivated graffiti prior to removing it.**

Digital cameras have been purchased for emergency or after-hours maintenance crews to take pictures of racially-motivated graffiti prior to removing it. HUD's monitoring shows that procedures have been established for maintenance crews to take photographs of graffiti prior to removal. After-hours pictures are taken by Police.

**Recommendation #36 -- Use Public and Indian Housing Drug Elimination funding for physical improvements to enhance security, including installing lighting systems and surveillance equipment.**

BHA contracted with a private security firm, Sparta, to provide an in depth on-site analysis of its security needs to help implement this recommendation. The contractor completed its assessment, met with BHA and issued a final report. BHA began implementing recommendations pursuant to the security contractor's report regarding lighting systems. To date lighting repair and maintenance work has been undertaken at the two South Boston federal developments, Mary Ellen McCormack and Old Colony, a survey of the lighting problems in Charlestown has been completed and a survey of lighting problems at the state development in South Boston, West Broadway, is underway.

**Recommendation #37 -- Develop and enforce a strict pet policy which is consistent with the requirements of Section 26 of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998.**

Addressed in #38 below



**Recommendation #38 -- Once a new pet policy is adopted, disseminate information about this policy and its enforcement to residents.**

BHA's pet policy was put out for a thirty day comment period on September 1, 2000, in light of a final regulation recently promulgated by HUD. The BHA has presented an argument that it would not be practicable for the Authority to solicit public comment on a draft policy without HUD's final regulation regarding pets in family housing having been published. HUD accepted this position given that the rule was imminent.

Now that HUD's final regulation has been published, the BHA pet policy has been submitted to the Resident Advisory Board (as required under QHWRA) and to the local tenant's organizations (under the BHA's Tenant Participation Policy) for review and comment. A Public Hearing was held on November 16, 2000. When the policy is adopted, the BHA will immediately disseminate it to residents as a lease amendment. Since HUD's Assessment last year, no further violent incidents have been reported of dog-related civil rights acts.

**Recommendation #39 -- Adopt performance measures for BHA employees in concert with union representatives.**

Performance measures have been adopted for all staff (including site managers) except for the Firefighters and Building Trades' employees (approximately 180 employees). Union contracts with these employees are in place until March 2001. Performance evaluations were completed and submitted to Human Resources (HR) on April 1, 2000. To date, the second group of employee evaluations, due to Human Resources on July 1, 2000, is substantially complete and the balance of submissions are in the process of being collected. HUD was on-site in April at the Human Resource Department to verify that evaluations were submitted and placed in employee files. On-site monitoring of the personnel files revealed that performance evaluations were done and goals, objectives and individual development plans were established and communicated to employees. Completion of this recommendation will not occur until the contracts for Firefighters and Trades' employees, approximately 20% of BHA workforce, have been negotiated and are in place. This is scheduled for spring of 2001.

**Recommendation #40 -- Develop individual development plans that include diversity and civil rights training for all BHA employees. Employee incentives should be tied to performance, including demonstrated commitment to civil rights.**

The BHA is conducting Diversity/Civil Rights Training for all staff. The two day sessions are ongoing throughout the year. All site managers have been trained. HUD has reviewed records of the training and the training materials, and HUD personnel also sat in on the training. The training sessions have been well received by staff and are a useful mechanism for creating a workforce that is both more aware of and sensitive to racial and ethnic differences reflected in the resident

population. The training also has provided a better understanding of civil rights issues the residents face and the BHA's implementation of its CRPP is designed to afford residents protections against such crimes.

BHA advises that it has begun to implement a performance evaluation system and individual development plans for all employees. Currently this system excludes the Building and Trades Unions' employees, (approximately 130 people) and the Firefighters Union (approximately 50 people). The new evaluation system will not be in place for these employees, who account for approximately 20% of BHA's workforce, until contracts have been negotiated with these unions. This is not scheduled to occur until spring of 2001.

The teamsters (approximately 350 people) union protested that the civil rights element was not part of the evaluation when their contract was negotiated. The BHA did not regard this matter as a mandatory subject of bargaining and included the element in the evaluations.

All employees received notification from the Administrator about these evaluations in a memorandum dated October 29, 1999. In that memorandum, the Firefighters and Building Trades Unions' employees were notified that this will be part of the upcoming contract negotiations. IDPs will not be in place for Firefighters and Building Trades Unions' employees until at least late spring of 2001.

All supervisors were provided with training on the performance evaluation process. There were seven training sessions held for supervisors. All were instructed to hold goal-setting sessions with each employee to discuss the evaluation process. The training was provided by Donahue Associates, a consulting firm. The training was developed in concert with BHA Human Resources. There were 155-160 employees trained in the subject.

The first group of employees were rated at the end of March and the evaluations were submitted to Human Resources on April 1, 2000. The second group of employees were rated at the end of June and to date 80% (521) of the evaluations have been received by Human Resources.

There are 15 elements to the evaluation, and the evaluation is placed in the employees' file. An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is attached to the end of the employees' performance evaluation. The IDP is in place for each employee after the performance evaluation is conveyed.

HUD's on-site monitoring visit in April verified that the evaluation forms are being submitted and placed in the employees files. HUD notes that these changes to the personnel system are impressive and will lead to better management of the Authority.

**Recommendation # 41 -- Shorten the length of time the BHA estimates it will take to provide mediation and diversity training to its employees.**

The Diversity/Civil Rights Training is being provided to all staff. Three hundred and eighty-five (385) staff, almost half of the workforce, have been trained since October 1999. Four one-day

training sessions a month will continue throughout this year until all employees complete the training program. It is anticipated that nearly all staff will have undergone the training program by the end of the year and plans are underway to develop a similar training program for 2001. Mediation Training has been provided to those staff interested in volunteering to conduct mediations of tenant disputes. These training sessions were provided by a consultant to the BHA from the Harvard Mediation Project. Ongoing mediation sessions are being performed by other consultants who also conduct the Diversity/Civil Rights Training sessions for staff and residents. BHA volunteer staff mediators have sat in on the mediations being performed by the Consultants as a part of the overall learning experience.

HUD's original concern in making this request to shorten the length of time that the Authority took to train its employees was that it may have taken years. In fact, HUD is pleased to know that the training is scheduled to be completed for the majority of the staff by the end of the year and commends the BHA for its diligence in keeping to this arduous schedule.

**Recommendation #42 – Develop a department-wide tracking system for employee certification of required CRPP training. Each department head should be able to tell who has been trained, on what, when and whether the employee attended. This will enable an employee's supervisor to ensure that this requirement is met.**

The BHA has developed an application of its software to track certification of CRPP training. HUD viewed two reports generated by the system that recorded all participants who participated in CRPP training through January 2000. The system is fully operational.

**Recommendation #43 -- Provide annual training to site managers and CRD staff who deal first hand with bias offenses.**

Annual training in civil rights for site managers and CRD staff who deal first-hand with bias offenses was completed in March 2000. Annual training for 2001 will occur next year as recommended.

**Recommendation #44 -- Provide immediate training to replacement managers at Old Colony and Charlestown on the CRPP.**

The replaced property managers at the Old Colony development in South Boston and the Bunker Hill development in Charlestown have been provided with training on the CRPP as recommended. Interviews with these site managers indicated that they possessed a thorough knowledge of the Civil Rights Protection Plan.

**Recommendation #45 -- Increase public review and participation in governance of the BHA including public meetings during which the Administrator and BHA department heads report on their progress in managing the housing authority.**

The Mayor has appointed six of the nine Monitoring Committee tenant members who will serve on the Monitoring Committee of the BHA. The remaining three appointments have been made, approved by the City Council sub-committee and are subject to a 30 day City Council confirmation period. The Council is expected to vote at their next meeting and if after a 30 period they fail to act, the appointments take effect. A meeting will be convened as soon as all Committee selections are made.

In the interim, and in the interest of increasing public review and participation in the BHA operations, four public community-wide meetings have been held by the Administrator, her staff and the BHA police and BPD. These meetings are designed to address resident concerns regarding the BHA Police's handling of public safety and civil rights issues. The Monitoring Committee will serve as a continued forum for addressing and evaluating residents' concerns with the BHA Police.

**Recommendation #46 -- Maximize the impact of the community tensions reduction pilot project in the City of Boston, funded by the Secretary under the Fair Housing Initiatives Program to build on the steps already taken by the BHA. The Boston community tensions project will address cross-cutting problems in City institutions such as the schools, neighborhoods, and public housing.**

BHA personnel serve on the Advisory committee for the FHIP grantee. The BHA maintains its readiness to cooperate with the FHIP grantee once it has been determined through the work-plan what activities and assistance the BHA can provide. The grantee completed a work-plan and shared its strategies with the BHA at the Advisory Committee meeting in June 2000.

HUD has impressed upon the FHIP grantee and the BHA the need to strengthen their cooperation to maximize the impact of the grant through direct involvement. HUD convened a coordination meeting in May 2000 to emphasize this point. Another coordination meeting was held by HUD on September 8, 2000 and a quarterly schedule has been devised for future coordination meetings.

**Recommendation #47 -- Reengineer the Occupancy function.**

The BHA is addressing a number of major issues within this recommendation. The BHA is working with TAG Associates in an Occupancy Futures Contract to improve the overall efficiency of the Occupancy Department.

TAG assisted the BHA in the development of the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy that is in itself a recommendation in the 30-day report.

The BHA has developed, in concert with the TAG contractor, marketing materials for the developments. These materials will allow the BHA to present written products to prospective residents that accentuate the positives about the public housing communities. Each development has a booklet and folder which will be provided to new or potential residents.

The following initiatives are underway and relate to recommendation #52, where these activities are also reported:

Upgrading the Occupancy Department's Computer system to enhance the Occupancy Department's effectiveness and contribute to the reengineering efforts. Programming is underway to rectify the unit offer and good cause programming that have consistently presented the BHA with problems.

BHA's Management Information Systems Department (MIS) has assigned a staff person to the Occupancy Department. This dedicated resource has proven to be instrumental in helping the Occupancy Department correct reporting problems with unit offers in the BHA's computer system.

Other recommendations already implemented by the BHA and were presented by the contractor include: 1) the addition of a preference for working families in the proposed ACOP; 2) the development of an updated public housing application for housing; 3) obtaining HUD approval of an application for Designated Housing; 4) the completion of the update of the public housing waiting list; and 5) the development of a Request for Proposals for an agency to conduct credit checks of applicants. Each of these items will contribute toward a more effective functioning of the Occupancy Department.

The BHA also has piloted an off-site occupancy program that is located at the Amory Street development. This pilot, at present, includes only elderly developments as the BHA has site-based waiting lists for the elderly. It is expected that in the future the BHA will propose using site-based lists for family developments as well. At that time, BHA may consider expanding the pilot, which would allow BHA to accept applications for family developments and process potential applicants at locations other than the central office at 52 Chauncy Street. The BHA plans to continue the program for the elderly developments and has expanded it this summer to include 14 additional complexes.

**Recommendation #48 -- Close the waiting list in order to concentrate on purging errors on the list.**

The BHA completed the waiting list update per the plan submitted to and approved by HUD. An update letter was mailed to every family on the waiting list (over 17,000 families). The waiting list for family housing was reduced to 8,627 as of April 14, 2000. The number of elderly applicants as of April 14, 2000 was 3,339. Four temporary employees were hired to assist with this process. The update was completed as scheduled. Refinements will continue to be made

while the list continues to remain open. The BHA anticipates completing the update of the list on a monthly basis. In total, with elderly included, the waiting list has been reduced to 11,966.

**Recommendation #49 – Submit a state-approved tenant selection and assignment plan so that it can be reviewed and approved on an expedited basis by HUD.**

HUD provided comments on the BHA's draft Admissions and Occupancy Policy on February 22, 2000, prior to review and approval by the state. Due to the number of major changes made to the document, the BHA proposed and HUD agreed to provide a 60 day public comment period which began June 1, 2000. A public hearing was held on June 29, 2000. The final policy will not be completed until after the expiration of the 60 day public comment period and after HUD and the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development's approval. Implementation of the policy is anticipated to occur in November 2000. HUD's receipt of a state-approved ACOP would not have had an effect on the timing of the process. The 60 day comment period along with the states lengthy comment cycle contributed to the expected delays. BHA submitted the plan on a timely basis in January 2000. HUD's receipt of the ACOP simultaneous to the state's receipt and HUD's quick turnaround helped to speed up the process.

**Recommendation #50 -- Immediately hire a Transfer Process Coordinator who will review the existing transfer process and simplify it; develop a BHA-wide computerized tracking system for transfer requests; and provide training to staff and tenants on the transfer process.**

In March, 2000 a new Transfer Process Coordinator was selected for the position. The job description for this position outlines the duties in the above recommendation. At the on-site monitoring visit, the files and computerized records of the transfer requests were reviewed and the new Coordinator was interviewed. Print-outs for March and mid-April have been reviewed. They show that the number of pending transfer requests has been reduced by more than 20%, from 186 on February 11, 2000 to 153 on April 14, 2000. On average, the Transfer Review Committee's docket is 25-30 cases per week.

The Transfer Process Coordinator manages the transfer process through the use of computer tracking mechanisms. The BHA has added a computerized coding system which tracks and analyzes the process. The new codes provide for referrals to various departments, e.g. , Civil Rights, Public Safety, Legal, or site managers for their input and/or additional information. The transfer process is now easier to track and is managed exclusively by the Transfer Process Coordinator, an improvement from one year ago when pending transfer cases were uncontrolled.

Training for site managers on the new computerized system is completed. New accountability was introduced at the monthly manager's meetings with an emphasis placed upon the managers being the first step in the transfer process and on the importance of timely referrals of transfers to the Occupancy Department. BHA has published a "Transfer Information Guide" which is available in English and Spanish. It is provided to all transfer applicants and provides telephone

numbers (Civil Rights, Public Safety, and Transfer Coordinator) and processing steps and requirements. BHA also is in the process of putting the Transfer Guide on tape in English and Spanish for the visually impaired.

The recommendation discusses the simplification of the transfer process. The BHA, because of its policies in granting transfer requests in a number of categories – over/under housed, life safety, emergency, substantial cause – and its determination to review and respond to all transfer requests, has simplified the process by using computerized tracking mechanisms which code transfer requests in the appropriate categories. With the addition of a Transfer Process Coordinator whose sole job is to focus on this issue and the weekly meetings of the Transfer Review Committee (TRC), the process is working far more effectively and emergency transfers are addressed immediately.

**Recommendation # 51 -- Give the Transfer Process Coordinator, when that post is filled, the ultimate responsibility for securing all reports related to a transfer request, compiling recommendations, obtaining additional information, scheduling meetings, and notifying all parties of the results of the Transfer Review Committee.**

The Transfer Process Coordinator is responsible for the duties cited above. The establishment of transfer policies, a tracking system and requirements placed upon site managers to adhere to these policies has improved the accountability and overall operations of the transfer functions. Files were comprehensive, included all updated work completed, including documents announcing and following up on referrals. In some cases, the process had been delayed, but there was evidence that the Transfer Review Committee (TRC) was working to address the reasons for the delays.

The Transfer Coordinator is entering decisions by the TRC into the database immediately after the TRC weekly meetings each Thursday or before the waiting list is run on Friday mid-day. The tracking logs indicated that transfer applicants were moving off of the pending transfer lists and into approved or disapproved status. Also, the Coordinator prepared all of the correspondence to the applicants either approving or disapproving their transfer requests.

**Recommendation #52 -- Upgrade the Occupancy Department's computer system. This should include giving site managers the ability to communicate directly with the Occupancy Department regarding transfer requests and unit vacancies, and give the Occupancy Department the ability to communicate directly with site managers regarding unit assignments and the status of transfer requests.**

All Occupancy and on site staff have the computer capability to access information contained in the recommendation. Occupancy staff use the capability to access that information, and on-site development staff have received training so that they are also able to utilize the systems to their fullest capabilities. Staff were receptive and enthusiastic at the training session attended by HUD

about this new opportunity. Training sessions for staff to learn this new system and further enhance their skills will continue to be held twice a week at BHA's computer training facility.

**Recommendation #53 -- Continue to submit HUD Form 50058 data through electronic transmissions and perform quality assurance checks to verify the accuracy of the data.**

The HUD 50058 is being transmitted by BHA via the Internet. The BHA is utilizing internal and HUD error reports to minimize data problems. HUD staff met with the BHA in March regarding the quality assurance checks of data. The BHA will monitor the accuracy checks through its office assessment process of family developments. Until the office assessments began in May 2000, the BHA sent a memorandum to managers advising them of the requirement to perform a Supervisory Audit of a certain percentage of files at every development.